

So the conference report was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DREIER). Pursuant to House Resolution 267, a motion that the House insist on its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate numbered 132 is adopted.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 797, adoption of the conference report on Treasury-Postal appropriations, I was unavoidably delayed in reaching the House floor in order to record my vote. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST FURTHER CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1977, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1996

Ms. PRYCE. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 253 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 253

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the further conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 1977) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1996, and for other purposes. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BURTON of Indiana). The gentlewoman from Ohio [Ms. PRYCE] is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. PRYCE. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California [Mr. BEILENSEN], my good friend, pending which time I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Ms. PRYCE asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks and to include extraneous material.)

Ms. PRYCE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to bring to the floor today this rule providing for the further consideration of the conference report H.R. 1977, the Department of the Interior and related agencies appropriations bill for the fiscal year 1996. This is a simple, fair rule which waives all points of order against the conference report and against its consideration.

The blanket waiver includes a waiver of clause 2 of rule XX as well as a waiver of clause 3 of rule XXVIII which permits the House to discuss provisions which may exceed the scope of differences between the House and Sen-

ate. Under the normal rules of the House, we will have 1 hour of debate on the conference report itself in addition to the minority's customary right to offer a motion to recommit with or without instructions. Considering the serious fiscal situation which our country now faces, I am hopeful that the House will accept the work of the conferees so that we can send this important legislation on to the President for his signature.

Every step we take to pass these important appropriations bills brings us one step closer to restoring stability to our Nation's budget and finances. As my colleagues will recall, the House first considered the conference report on the Interior bill on September 29. By a vote of 277 to 147, the House voted to send the bill back to conference with instructions to reinstate the House-passed moratorium on issuing mining patents. Although the House passed a separate motion instructing conferees to stand by the moratorium language, the conference agreed, the conference agreement dropped this provision and instead replaced it with the Senate language essentially requiring payment of fair market value.

This new conference agreement continues the existing moratorium on issuing mining patents until mining law reform is enacted either as a part of reconciliation or if it is passed by both the House and Senate in a freestanding identical bill. Under the compromise agreement, the Interior Department is required to process within 3 years at least 90 percent of grandfathered claims which are exempt from the current moratorium.

In addition to addressing the moratorium issue, the conference report provides funding for the core program and missions of the agencies covered by this legislation including funding for operating the national park system and all of our public lands and for the health, care and education needs of Native Americans.

Although the bill represents less spending than last year's level, funding for the operations of the Nation's national parks and monuments, national forests and grasslands, public lands and national wildlife refugees has been maintained. The bill also provides for basic energy research with an emphasis on industry cost sharing, and it funds research programs which focus on protecting human life and property from earthquakes and similar natural hazards.

Funding for the repair and maintenance of the various Smithsonian museums and the National Gallery of Art has actually been increased, and the bill continues to demand Outer Continental Shelf offshore oil and gas leasing. The conference report also includes a reduction in the funding for the naval petroleum reserve need today ensure that the outlays in the conference report match the subcommittee's 602(b) outlay allocation and a provision permitting the National Park

Service to spend up to \$100,000 to develop a management plan for the Mojave National Preserve.

The conference report total is more than 10 percent below the amount provided in last year's legislation. Savings have been achieved by eliminating redundant management layers, reducing grants programs and doing away with functions which the subcommittee believes are not inherent Federal responsibilities. Chairman REGULA and the members of the Committee on Appropriations have made some very difficult choices in writing this year's bill, and I applaud them for their hard work and dedication. The chairman's system of prioritizing the must-do's, the need-to-do's and the nice-to-do's reflects the kind of fiscal restraint and responsibility we need to keep this Nation firmly on the road to a balanced budget.

So I commend Chairman REGULA for his leadership and for his patience in crafting a bill that avoids unnecessary earmarks and that honors our fundamental commitment to the American people to achieve meaningful deficit reduction and to create a smaller, more efficient Federal Government.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, let me say that I look forward to hearing from my good friend from Ohio and from other Members who played a role in shaping this final conference agreement. House Resolution 253 differs very little from the kind of rule granted by the Committee on Rules this year for conference reports on other appropriations bills. It is entirely appropriate for this debate. I urge my colleagues to adopt this rule and to pass the conference report without any further delay.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BEILENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I thank the distinguished gentlewoman from Ohio [Ms. PRYCE] for yielding the customary 30 minutes of debate time to me.

Mr. Speaker, we oppose this rule, and the measure it makes in order, the conference report on Interior appropriations for fiscal 1996. This new conference report is only slightly different from the version of the legislation the House voted to return to the conference committee back in September. For the same reasons we stated at that time, we believe that Members should reject this rule and this conference report.

The rule before us waives all points of order against the conference report, and against its consideration. One major reason why the conference report needs such a rule is that it contains numerous violations of clause 2 of rule XXI, the rule that prohibits legislation—policy matters—in an appropriations bill.

We acknowledge that it is very difficult to avoid violating rule XXI entirely in an appropriations bill, but the Rules Committee usually tries—or we did try, in previous Congresses—to